MARVEL

8

LGY#173

VENOM

DONNY CATES • IBAN COELLO • ANDRES MOSSA

delgado

DISGRACED REPORTER **EDDIE BROCK** STUMBLED UPON AN AGGRESSIVE ALIEN ORGANISM, CALLED THE SYMBIOTE, DURING ONE OF THE LOWEST POINTS OF HIS LIFE. SHARING A SIMILAR NEED FOR JUSTICE IN THE FORM OF VENGEANCE, THE SYMBIOTE BONDED WITH EDDIE AND THEIR UNION GRANTED HIM POWERS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF SPIDER-MAN, AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF OTHER UNIQUE ABILITIES. TOGETHER, THEY NOW FIGHT CRIME AS THE WICKED WEB-SLINGER CALLED

VENOM

IN THE WAKE OF S.H.I.E.L.D.'s COLLAPSE, AN ANCIENT SYMBIOTIC DRAGON WAS RELEASED INTO NEW YORK.

AFTER A BATTLE THAT RAGED ACROSS THE CITY, VENOM STOPPED THE CREATURE, BUT THAT VICTORY CAME AT GREAT COST.

STOPPING THE DRAGON PROVED TOO GREAT A STRAIN FOR BOTH EDDIE AND THE SYMBIOTE, AND THE CREATURE'S PERSONALITY AND VOICE HAVE BEEN STRIPPED AWAY AS A RESULT.

NOW, IT IS LITTLE MORE THAN AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL ORGANISM LIVING WITHIN EDDIE'S FLESH, MOTIVATED BY HIS SUBCONSCIOUS.

EDDIE, MORE ALONE THAN EVER, SLIPPED INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS, ONLY TO AWAKEN HELD CAPTIVE BY ***THE MAKER***...

DONNY CATES WRITER IBAN COELLO ARTIST

ANDRES MOSSA COLOR ARTIST VC's CLAYTON COWLES LETTERER

RYAN STEGMAN, JP MAYER & EDGAR DELGADO COVER ARTISTS

ANTHONY GAMBINO
TITLE PAGE DESIGN

LAUREN AMARO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

DEVIN LEWIS
EDITOR

NICK LOWE
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

C.B. CEBULSKI
EDITOR IN CHIEF

JOE QUESADA
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER

DAN BUCKLEY
PRESIDENT

ALAN FINE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

© 2018 MARVEL. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental.

IN MEMO
FLAS
THOMP

HEY, FLASH.

NOT SURE WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO SAY, REALLY.

FEELS KINDA...WRONG, YOU KNOW?

ME BEING HERE...

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
FLASH THOMPSON

...INSTEAD OF YOU.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
FLASH THOMPSON

MY OTHER-- -SIGH- **OUR** OTHER, I GUESS I SHOULD SAY...

...IT ALWAYS LIKED YOU BETTER. HELL, EVERYONE DID, I GUESS.

I ALWAYS ACTED LIKE IT DIDN'T BOTHER ME. LIKE, I WAS THE ORIGINAL, SO I WAS JUST THE...I DON'T KNOW... THE DEFAULT OR SOMETHING...

BUT THE TRUTH IS...

...IT RIPS ME UP, FLASH.

IT THINKS ABOUT YOU. THE OTHER.

ALL THE TIME. IT DOESN'T THINK I KNOW THAT, BUT...I DO. I CAN FEEL IT.

EVEN NOW, WITH ITS VOICE GONE, I CAN STILL FEEL IT...PULLING TOWARD YOU...

IT'S...

IT'S JUST TOUGH BEING SOMEONE'S SECOND BEST, YOU KNOW?

Are you quite done?

YEAH.

YEAH. I'M DONE.

Very well.

Now...

TEK

...where were we?

YOU JUST TOLD ME MY OTHER WAS ***BRAIN-DEAD.***

AFTER TELLING ME IT'S BEEN ERASING PARTS OF MY MIND.

AND THAT YOU STOLE A PIECE OF THE ***SYMBIOTE DRAGON*** AND THAT SOMEONE THEN ***STOLE*** IT FROM YOU.

AND YOU ACCUSED ME OF BEING INVOLVED IN ALL OF THIS INSANE @#$% WITHOUT EVER TELLING ME WHY YOU WANT THAT SAMPLE OR WHO YOU WORK FOR.

"Where were we" was more or less a rhetorical question, Edward.

I have a photographic memory.

But it's nice to know you've been paying attention.

YOU'RE SMART. I GET THAT. SO YOU MUST KNOW I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE THEFT OF THAT SAMPLE.

WHEN DO I GET TO GO HOME?

I suspect you are right, yes. But I also believe your other may know things that you do not.

So, until such time that my curiosity is sated, I'm afraid you have my attention.

Where is home, Edward?

Your apartment has been vacated. You've not been there for a month or so, after all.

Is it your father's home in San Francisco?

Your other took you there during your escape.

Perhaps that was some buried desire to return home it was responding to?

Why would that be, I wonder? By all accounts your childhood was rather--

THERE'S ONLY SO MUCH MORE OF THIS I'M GOING TO TAKE.

I'll dictate how much more of this you will take.

Where would you go if I let you leave?

I WOULD GO AND SEE THE REAL FLASH THOMPSON'S GRAVE, FOR ONE.

Hmmm. Let me show you something, Edward...

I give you Corporal Eugene *"Flash"* Thompson.

Or, rather...the most interesting part of him.

Project PEGASUS was a rather blunt organization, but they did keep extensive medical and biological samples of their...subjects.

From a blood test taken before Flash's time as Anti-Venom, I was able to ascertain something fascinating about our symbiotic friends.

You see, we've discovered that the symbiote never ***truly*** leaves a host.

A cellular imprint, a ***codex*** as we've been calling it, is always left behind as a way for their kind to share information about hosts with the rest of the hive.

Your symbiote has not been connected to its hive in some time, however. So this codex, and the others it's left behind, has more or less gone unused.

But they are there.

Wrapped around the host's DNA structure like a great black serpent.

Always... waiting.

Which is why, Edward, the sample of the symbiote dragon is so important.

We believe it could contain information about the symbiote species and mankind as a whole that could revolutionize scientific progress as we know--

HOLD ON. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

Nothing. Well, not yet at least. But, I believe there is a way to ***reactivate*** your symbiote's connection to the hive by bonding these trace amounts of its symbiotic codex to living tissue.

So the next step is to exhume Flash Thompson's grave and retrieve his body from Arlington National, and which point we can--

YOU'RE...WAIT... YOU'RE GOING TO ***DIG UP*** FLASH'S BODY? WHAT THE HELL IS THE MATTER WITH YOU?

Don't be sentimental. It's not Flash Thompson. It's an empty vessel.

His body has information about your kind that I need.

Specifically his pancreas, spinal fluid and adrenal--

RAGHH!!

CRASH

LEAVE... FLASH... ALONE...

Hmmm. Seems I've woken the dog up.

Very well.

EVEN AS SIMPLE A CREATURE AS IT IS NOW, I CAN *FEEL* IT...

...THE *RAGE* INSIDE MY OTHER.

IT WANTS TO PROTECT FLASH FROM THIS MONSTER.

HOLD HIM BACK!

SO I DO WHAT IT WANTS.

BECAUSE FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE WE KILLED THAT DAMN DRAGON, I CAN SENSE ITS PRESENCE.

No!

AND I'D LIKE TO THINK IT WOULD DO THE SAME FOR ME.

Ahh!

BUT PART OF ME KNOWS THAT'S A LIE.

AGH!

IT'LL ALWAYS BE FLASH.

OKAY. THAT'S GOOD.

COME ON...

ENOUGH, BROCK. GET YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME.

LET'S GET YOU THE HELL OUT OF HERE.

WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS MAUDLIN CRAP.

WE NEED TO GET OUT HERE BEFORE ALL--

--HELL BREAKS LOOSE.

SONICS!

AAGGH!!

DAMMIT! WHOLE PLACE IS CRAWLING WITH SOLDIERS CARRYING ANTI-SYMBIOTE TECH.

MY OTHER WON'T SURVIVE ANOTHER ATTACK LIKE THAT.

WHAT THE HELL AM I GOING TO...

WAIT...

THE SYMBIOTE IS PULLING ME TOWARD FLASH'S CODEX?

BUT...WHY? IT'S...

WAIT! NO!

SOMETHING'S HAPPENING.

...MY OTHER... RE-ABSORBING FLASH'S CODEX...

IT'S... IMPOSSIBLE...

FLASH... HE'S...

BOOM

...HE'S STILL HERE.

HEY, BROCK. YOU MIND IF I DRIVE?

BE MY GUEST, THOMPSON.

HELL YEAH.

AND SUDDENLY, I'M A PASSENGER AGAIN.

BUT THIS IS DIFFERENT. NOT LIKE WHEN KNULL WAS INFECTING MY OTHER.

THAT FELT LIKE DROWNING.

THIS IS LIKE BACKUP.

I KNOW THIS ISN'T REALLY HIM.

JUST SOME LINGERING IMPRINT OF THE MAN FLASH THOMPSON *USED* TO BE.

THE SYMBIOTE IS SPEAKING IN HIS VOICE BECAUSE IT DOESN'T HAVE ONE OF ITS OWN.

AND WATCHING HIM LIKE THIS...

...I THINK I FINALLY GET IT.

MUCH AS I HATE TO ADMIT IT...

KRABOOM

...FLASH THOMPSON WAS A BADASS VENOM.

LATER...

Security mainframe?

Yes, Maker?

Erase the security footage from time stamp 23:28 to 24:13 from lab 009.

You would like me to erase your time locked in the autopsy drawer, then?

Security mainframe, deactivate sentience, please.

Yes, Maker.

sigh

Voice I.D.: OVERSIGHT.

Identifying...

Please comply with fingerprint and retina scans or be destroyed.

Identity confirmed.

Richards, Reed. Maker.

Welcome to OVERSIGHT.

Brock got away. He took Flash Thompson's codex. Frustrating, really.

Alas, I have tagged him with a tracker. Should we need him in the future.

There is still the open question of who raided my lab and stole the dragon sample, though.

That part does quite... vex me.

Oh, well...

What's next?

LATER...

IN MEMORY OF
FLASH
THOMPSON

HEY, FLASH.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP BACK AT THE LAB.

DON'T KNOW THAT I COULD HAVE DONE THAT WITHOUT YOU.

WHATEVER WAS LEFT OF YOU IN THAT CODEX SEEMS TO HAVE BURNED OUT FROM MY--FROM *OUR* OTHER.

CAN'T HEAR YOU ANYMORE. CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING ANYMORE...

BUT...

...I'LL CARRY WHAT'S LEFT WITH ME WHEREVER I GO, BROTHER.

IN MEMO
FLAS
THOMP

GET SOME REST.

BEEN A HELL OF A FEW WEEKS. DRAGONS AND GODS AND MADMEN ASIDE...

I'M STILL HERE. I'M STILL STANDING.

BUT I'M MORE ALONE THAN I'VE EVER BEEN.

MAYBE THAT'S SOMETHING I NEED TO FINALLY GET MY HEAD AROUND.

WHY DOES BEING ALONE SCARE YOU SO DAMN MUCH, BROCK?

WHAT ARE YOU RUNNING FROM?

HELL, MAYBE YOU DON'T NEED TO RUN ANYMORE...

MAYBE IT'S TIME YOU LOOKED BACK AT THE ABYSS...

SAN FRANCIS

...MAYBE THIS TIME IT'LL BE THE ONE TO BLINK.

MY TEAM AND I RETRIEVED THE SAMPLE FROM THE LABORATORY OF THE MAKER.

WE WERE NOT FOLLOWED OR FOUND.

I DO THESE THINGS IN HIS NAME...

...SO THE DARKNESS SHALL DEVOUR THE LIGHT.

SO OUR LORD WILL WAKE AGAIN IN THIS NEW VESSEL...

AND WE WILL JOIN HIM.

TOGETHER.

FOREVER...

C. KASADY

...IN THE VOID.

TO BE CONTINUED...

Eddie's Clubhouse

SEND E-MAILS TO **SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM.** (PLEASE MARK "OKAY TO PRINT"!)

Hey there, Venomaniacs!

I don't think we've been formally introduced yet--I'm Lauren Amaro, and I'm the Assistant Editor over here at Eddie's Clubhouse! I hope you've all been enjoying Iban Coello and Andres Mossa's special guest issues of VENOM as much as we have! You guys have shown SO MUCH love for the wicked web-slinger and without y'all none of this would be possible, so we'd like to turn the spotlight on you and answer some of your burning Venom questions!

Dear Eddie's Clubhouse,

This is, in my opinion, the greatest VENOM ongoing series yet. I picked up the first issue, and after reading it I loved it. I was so excited for the character I located all the previous issues and binge-read them! After reading all the issues I have a couple of questions:

1. Will we ever see Beck and underground San Francisco again?

2. Will Venom ever bond with the Mercury disease from VENOM: THE MADNESS again?

3. Is the Scream symbiote dead?

4. Are we going to see the Maniac anytime soon?

5. And finally, is VENOM: FIRST HOST part of the Legacy numbering?

Speaking of Legacy numbering, while looking through the covers gallery on Venom #150, I noticed that VENOM: SIGN OF THE BOSS was absent. So naturally, like an average comic geek, I counted all the issues on the gallery and I was surprised to find out that VENOM #150 was actually VENOM #152.

Sincerely,
Galen J.

As I'm sure you understand, Galen, I can't answer ALL your questions, but let's see if we can satisfy some of your curiosity...

1. Well, while we may not be seeing Beck Underwood anytime soon, if any of you readers have picked up VENOM #7, you'll know that Venom has indeed returned to his old stomping grounds of San Francisco! He's got some unfinished business in the Golden City, but you'll have to keep reading to find out exactly what that is!

As someone who grew up in the Bay Area, I gotta say it's been a delight to watch Ryan turn in pages for issue #9--the art is gorgeous and really captures the nuances of the city! Fans, especially anyone on the West Coast, are definitely gonna want to preorder their issues now!

2. We don't have any plans for the Mercury disease currently, but maybe one day! And for those of you looking to take a walk down memory lane and revisit THE MADNESS, writer/illustrator extraordinaire James Stokoe just completed a new take on it... on-sale now in the first-ever VENOM ANNUAL!

3. As a doornail. That doesn't mean we still don't have plans for her...but I'll never tell!

4. Well, twist my arm, why don't ya. Let's just say we're going to be seeing a lot of the other symbiotes soon. ;)

5. Great question, Galen! No comment.

Ha! You've got us dead to rights, and this is actually Editor Devin Lewis' greatest shame. What can I say? we all have our strengths, and counting ain't Devin's. Maybe he'll have his act together by #200? #250 FOR SURE.

Hi Devin,

Longtime Venom fan here. I must say, good job on your team creating more stories for us Venom fans to read. I collected a lot of symbiote comics and action figures.

Just a quick question: will we see or hear again from Toxin again soon? Also, I hope that we will have a good new character story with the new offspring, Sleeper.

Thank you and more power to your team!
Jerold

Like I was telling Galen, definitely keep your eyes peeled for more symbiotes in the future! For those of you who may be unfamiliar with Sleeper, go check out Mike Costa's VENOM: FIRST HOST! It's a great miniseries that shows, you guessed it, Venom's very first host before the symbiote landed on Earth! Plus, it introduces Venom's latest offspring, Sleeper, designed by the incredible Mark Bagley. But with what Donny's got cooking up, I tell ya, Sleeper will have a hell of an introduction to the rest of the symbiote family!

Hey guys,

I've been a huge fan of the symbiotes, as well as Spider-Man, for quite a while now and I've been wondering: since the introduction of Knull and the confirmation that symbiotes are made more of a dark presence rather than organic matter, what does this mean for symbiotes of colors other than black (e.g. Carnage, Toxin [who I hope to see return to the pages one day], and the combined symbiote of Jubulile Van Scotter)?

Anyways, I've loved all of your recent releases. I think the story of Venom seems to be headed in an awesome direction, seeing more of the backstory of the symbiotes just might be one of the biggest bombshells in the whole Marvel universe this year!

Thanks,
Nick R.

My read on this is that the first symbiote that Knull created was comprised of the dark empty recesses of space, and the subsequent symbiotes that Knull created were pulled from that same resource. However, when Venom spawns he's not in the same isolated environment that Knull is. Venom has interacted with people and his surroundings on Earth, and his offspring are generated from himself, rather than from the dark matter (for lack of a better term) that Knull pulls from. In that way, Venom's spawn are a product of both the Venom symbiote and environmental factors, to say nothing of the hosts or conditions that they may have been incubated in, and so those elements are reflected in their coloring!

...Or something!

Thanks, Nick! Keep reading. We got one or two more bombshells left in us before the year is out.

Just read VENOM #5. I am loving the series so far--great writing and the art is superb. Storytelling-wise, everything is getting interesting with the new twist on the Venom origin and mythos.

I am just concerned that the series will oversaturate or overexplain everything. Interestingly enough, I was thinking of similarities with the VENOM 2099 symbiote.

Anyhow, would there be appearances of

Eddie's Clubhouse

LAUREN AMARO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

DEVIN LEWIS EDITOR
NICK LOWE EXECUTIVE EDITOR

C.B. CEBULSKI
EDITOR IN CHIEF

JOE QUESADA
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER

DAN BUCKLEY
PRESIDENT

ALAN FINE
EXEC. PRODUCER

SEND E-MAILS TO **SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM.** (PLEASE MARK "OKAY TO PRINT"!)

the other Venom offspring, like Carnage and the other surviving ones?

Thanks and more power. Looking forward to the next issues.

Make Mine Marvel.

R. Bats

I think that's one of the great things about Donny's VENOM run. It doesn't feel like he's trying to poke holes in the existing canon or trying to explain things about the symbiote in an attempt to "rewrite" history or change the character in order to leave his mark on Venom. Rather, Donny's run is asking questions that no one has thought to ask about Venom before, and in doing so he's opened avenues of character exploration for both Eddie and the symbiote, rather than cutting them off or boxing the characters in. It's been so great to see all of you get so excited seeing Venom in a new light, asking questions and speculating about what all these events mean for both Eddie and the symbiote and how that affects your understanding of the character. I think it helps a lot that the creative team on this main VENOM series--Donny, Ryan, JP, Frank, Clayton and our guest artists, Iban and Andres--are just as excited to find out what happens next as you guys!

Well, since everyone keeps asking we may as well tell you! Our next one-shot features the return of a fan-favorite in WEB OF VENOM: CARNAGE BORN! From the amazing creative team of Donny Cates, Danilo Beyruth and Cris Peter, trust me, you guys don't want to miss this!

A much better issue than Venom #4.

That said, what, we're just going to ignore Flash Thompson and the other 2-3 Venoms there have been over the years?

Cheers,
Andrew J. Shaw

PS: Here's hoping the Venom series gets to someday be about other things than Symbiotes and Criminal Dealings.

Hi, Andrew! Your pals here at the House of Ideas were a step ahead of you this time 'round. Ann Weying, Ben Reilly, Angelo Fortunato, Mac Gargan, Lee Price, Andi Benton--don't you worry! We've done our homework and have plans for 'em all.

Keep reading, True Believer!

DEAR VENOM CREW,

WOW! All I gotta say is WOW! So after reading Venom #1 I've got my faith rekindled with how Marvel has been handling some of their characters. Donny Cates really wrote something that I haven't seen for a VERY long time. Donny created a story unlike any Venom story I've ever read. The fact that we hear the symbiote actually talk with Eddie is something I've never read before and to hear it going crazy is something else I've never read before. A lot of times Eddie would talk to the symbiote and would kinda respond to it as if it said something in his head. Now to get to Ryan Stegman's art, AMAZING!, to see this kind of art nowadays is extremely rare because it is so grim and gritty but also very detailed and just flat-out cool looking. Ryan does an excellent amalgamation of both Todd McFarlane and Erik Larsen's Venom. He mixes in the pure black Venom with very minimal tongue of Todd along with very sharp teeth and super long tongue of Erik. It looks really cool to say the least because I love both versions of Venom. Keep it up, fellas, this is a book dedicated to hard-core Venom fans and a big love letter for fans. Thanks Guys! MAKE MINE MARVEL

Marc Graffius
Orlando, Florida

Couldn't have said it better myself. Thanks for reading, Marc!

Good day!

Well I have to say this has been the most fun I have had reading a Venom comic ever! In such a short time you have found a way to re-invent a villainous icon while staying true to what makes the relationship between Eddie and the symbiote so powerful! Somehow, you have even managed to make the retcon cool again and inspired so many to go back and read or reread Aaron's epic GOD BOMB story. I can't wait to see what happens next....

1. Will Knull escape his Klyntar?

2. Will he die at the hands of his own symbiote sword as the Dragon did in Beowulf?

3. Was that sword forged inside the head of the Celestial Knowhere?

4. Will we ever learn the origin of the golden gods who once defeated Knull?

5. Will we get a Rex Strickland one-shot?

There are sooooo many questions we all want answered! I just want to thank you for an epic run, killer art and for making Venom great again!

-Topher S.

All great questions, Topher! But I'm fast running out of space so I'll just answer the last one. Rex Strickland ended up being an unexpected favorite of everyone at Venom HQ, and we were so glad that so many of you expressed the same feeling! But Rex has ALREADY been the star of a one-shot! If you haven't already, go to your local comic book store and ask for WEB OF VENOM: VE'NAM! It explores the first sym-soldier program and how the Rex acquired a piece of the symbiote dragon in the first place. Besides Donny working his usual storytelling magic, Juanan Ramirez and Felipe Sobrierio knocked it out of the park on the art and colors.

Thank you all for reading and continuing to pick up this series! Can't wait to hear what you all think of Iban and Andres fantastic stint on this book, and I hope you all continue on with us to see the absolute maelstrom of insanity that Donny, Ryan and all of us here at the House of Ideas have planned.

Whether you've been a longtime fan of Venom, or if this is your first venture into the world of comics, there's something for every reader in this series. So be sure to pick up the first full arc if you haven't already, and tell your comic shop to add it to your pull list, because you won't want to miss what comes next.

It'll make your jaw drop, it'll make you call your friends and family and tell them you love them, it may even break your heart. But whatever happens, you won't be able to put this book down...

See ya next time and until then, stay VENOMOUS!

Lauren

@lauren_amaro43

ZONE